

## USING ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE MODEL THROUGH PROBLEM BASED LEARNING APPROACH IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims at finding out the effectiveness of the instructional package developed based on PBL approach in teaching English, observing it to improve the students' communicative competence and critical thinking ability, and investigating the challenges of the implementation of it at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia. The data collected analyzed statistically to measure the efficiency of the instructional package developed based on PBL approach. The responses of both students and teachers on the application of PBL approach in teaching English at Vocational High School analyzed using interactive technique through qualitative analysis. The implementation of the instructional package developed based on PBL approach, especially where English was taught for occupational purposes such as in Vocational High School was categorized effective. The achievement of the students in the current study indicated the positive correlation with the improvement of their critical thinking ability. As a new applied model in teaching English in the current EFL teaching context, there are still several challenging factors need to anticipate in terms of students' habit of using their mother tongue and level of English proficiency. This study showed that the instructional package developed based on PBL approach in teaching English at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia was helpful in developing the students' communicative competence and their critical thinking.

Keywords: *Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Instructional Package model, Critical thinking*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian context, the implementation of Competency Based Curriculum has brought a number of changes for teachers, headmasters and other educational stakeholders in all levels, both provincial and district levels. These reforms required changes in syllabus, lesson plan, students' book, students' worksheet, and the assessment instruments in accordance with the students' needs and school environment. The changes also cover the method of teaching, teachers' beliefs, and the supporting facilities that help to equip the philosophy of Competency Based Curriculum. This in a line with Problem Based Learning (PBL), which provide students critical thinking, self-directed learning, and problem solving skills for encouraging students' participation in the learning process (Onyon, 2012; Choi et al. 2013; Pastirik, 2006; Taylor and Miflin, 2008).

To respond to the changes of curriculum, there are several trainings for teachers, which have been conducting in some cities, in Indonesia, to train teachers. They come from all provinces, to introduce the concept and the implementation of Competency based Curriculum which now known as School Based Curriculum. However, the implications of such training do not always indicate significant changes and improvement in teaching and learning process (Kealey et al. 2000). The teachers have no enough time to develop the materials due to the compulsory to read the new concept and teach classes from a range of disciplines. This indicates that time is an obstacle for teacher in teaching and learning process (Collinson and Cook, 2001). This condition encourages the Indonesian Ministry of Education to change the emphasis of teacher training. This is in a line with Hargreaves (1988) that the emphasize of teacher primary training should provide teachers with teaching personality, learned knowledge and skills rather than demanding them to be more competence in their own discipline.

On the other side, eagerness and motivation of learners in the classroom might be disappearing. Motivation for students as an essential part of their learning process need concern from teachers (Regan, 2003; Winston et al. 2012). Nevertheless, many teachers have inadequate portion of extensive training on the method of teaching (Saleh et al. 2012). As a result, teachers find teaching method as troublesome when they are dealing with students, especially for the large class. It seems that large class is attributed to developing countries in which students perform negative behaviour toward classroom interactions. Furthermore, in EFL setting, many inexperienced teachers may tend to teach based on what is originally stated on textbook (Richards, 1993). They are incompetence in developing materials on a textbook to create an enjoyable atmosphere learning in a large class.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Teachers in Indonesia still deal with many problems in terms of teaching and learning process. Specifically, the EFL teachers of Vocational High School in Indonesia cannot develop the teaching materials and activities needed in line with the concepts stated in the curriculum. They could not develop materials, which could enhance students' critical thinking to solve the real problems faced by the society in South Sulawesi. They also still teaching using books issued in Java province in which the design and materials development are irrelevant with the students' socio-culture in South Sulawesi. Hence, teachers are incompetent to go beyond the socio-cultural margins by which break them up from their students (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). One of the causes of these phenomena might be due to the lack of understanding of new concepts of School Based Curriculum. This is an irritating issue because of the principal of current curriculum has been put into practice since 2006.

The trend in language teaching and learning in most of the Vocational High School in Makassar has made learners learn the language in a structured, linear fashion using unrealistic examples. Language has been taught and learnt with importance positioned on the content, not on the learning activity (Met, 1991). Many times, learning activities are not only few, but far from being real and their practice leads learners find difficulty to struggle reinforcing the lessons. Products of this teaching type and learning process are learners can understand all about the rules of the language but lack of comprehension to use the language proficiently in the real world. In response to this, one method, which advocates learning by engaging learners in authentic learning activities, is Problem Based Learning (PBL), which uses real-life problems as the starting point and focus on the learning (Dunlap, 2008). It is based on the principle that the learning does not take place merely in the head of the learners as an individual but in the social life field in which participants as a team play deciding a role in what and how individual learns. Although PBL was used initially as an alternative teaching method for solving medical problems as real-life cases, the same method can be applied in other field of study. As Barrows (1986) states that PBL does not specifically refer to certain teaching method, but it depends on the design of teaching method used and teachers' skills. However, PBL is an approach that has been more or less since the late 1960s (Neufeld and Barrows, 1974). Moreover, Roschelle (1999) believes that problem-based learning has been in the early 20th century, which is rooted in John Dewey's project-based pedagogy.

In current classroom setting, learners are unable to see the significance of what they are learning as an instrument to their real life as they have to deal with a pattern change of paradigm. This issue has been studied by Kumar and Natarajan (2007). They are incapable to find out the importance of the assignment to their apparent desires by which learners seems to adopt an endurance direction and complete the assignment with negligible attempt (Murphy, 2003). While the traditional education model practices mixture unmotivated and uninterested students with a huge amount of materials to memorize, students' activity at school does not prepare them enough for their life outside the classroom. The learning process attitude of students is reflected in their absence rate as well as poor intellectual performance. In classroom, learning is not merely a restriction of materials to teach the students for one day and complete the syllabus for one semester. It is certainly unexpected due to the knowledge acquisition, which take place simultaneously in a package with other skills. In other words, students simply become unskilled at their language skills, but acquire numerous general skills. This circumstance necessitate the authority of stimulating students to gain knowledge of real life by which is autonomous and confident in an intellectual awareness to find out the problem solving as a feature of PBL . All the way through PBL, the knowledge perspective of the students becomes an extensive range of skills, which they can acquire with the objective material. Thus, in EFL learning, PBL presents an approach that can integrate course materials into English as a Specific Purposes (Neville and Britt, 2007; Burkšaitien<sup>+</sup> and Teresevičien<sup>+</sup>, 2008). However, PBL is just an approach; the commitment of instructors on self-directed learning has significant roles to reach the success of its implementation. This has been studied by Choi et al. (2013) that there were not statistically considerable differences between the PBL and conventional setting; however, the higher grade on self-directed learning is parallel with the level on the problem-solving and critical thinking skill.

### **3. OBJECTIVES THE STUDY**

The research studies above revealed that both teachers and students inevitably faced crucial issues, especially for developing learners' communicative competence, autonomy, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Up until now, there has not any effective instruction package to develop such skills. As the consequences, the students' quality of Vocational High School was quite low. Therefore, it is paramount importance to develop English instructional package based on the principle of Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach.

Thus, the objectives of this as follows:

1. Investigating the effectiveness of the instructional package developed based on PBL approach in teaching English at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia.
2. Finding out the instructional package developed based on PBL approach to improve the students' communicative competence and critical thinking ability at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia.
3. Exploring the challenges of the implementation of the instructional package developed based on PBL model in teaching English at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia.

### **4. METHOD**

Based on the objective of study above, the data collected analyzed statistically to measure the efficiency of the instructional package, which developed based on PBL approach. In analyzing the responses of both students and teachers on the application of PBL approach in teaching English at Vocational High School, interactive technique of qualitative analysis employed. As qualitative researchers, the authors collect the data first and then prepare for analyzing it. The participants of the study were the XI year students of Vocational High School 4 Makassar, Indonesia. In collecting data for the current study, some instruments used, they are, interview format, observation checklist, notes, and tape recorder.

### **5. RESULTS**

The analysis after applying Instructional Package model in teaching English as Specific Purposes through PBL in Vocational High School showed that the fundamental difficulty was the tendency of the current teaching approach. It does not give the possibility for students to precede their communication skill. As a result, the students' aptitude in a social context to communicate became passive, hesitant to ask questions, and complicated to transfer the ideas they have both in English and in Indonesian. The analysis after implementing the Instructional Package model in teaching English as Specific Purposes (ESP) with PBL approach as follows:

#### **5.1. Students Responses' Analysis**

The characteristic of students' communication in learning English based on PBL approach at Vocational High School was categorized active in grouping mode of activity compared to the individual mode. Students' prior competence to communicate in the frame of developing cognitive competence tends to get a better grade on grouping mode and less good score on individual mode. Although the ability to think critically by developing idea categorized as good or average, this circumstances arise in a learning environment that learners have a low level of language competence. Therefore, this implies that the students' competence to communicate tends to show an improvement through the implementation such an approach.

#### **5.2. Teaching Material Analysis**

Topics designed and developed hierarchically and systematically based on the characteristics of the problem faced by the society in South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. It is based on the national standard of competence related to the students' communication competence. In the current study, the problem faced, for example, economic problem. The teachers' teaching method should be change to set up students dealing with new situations, instructional model, and different approach due to the change of curriculum.

### **5.3. Students' Assignments' Analysis**

It is found that the identification of the tasks done by the students while and after they were taught based on PBL approach with instructional packages model were categorized good, especially in accomplishing the tasks in the students' worksheet. The analysis of the tasks included the students understanding and objective of the material, which determined by their activeness and commitment as the bases for developing communication competence. The analysis revealed that out of 99 students being the respondents of the study, there were 69 (69.70%) students categorized as very high. Five (5.05%) students categorized as very poor. The rest 19 (19.19%) were categorized as medium ability students. Based on the criteria used in the current study, students have good communication competence if they meet the minimum score was not less than 65. In the study, as indicated by the result of descriptive analysis, there were 89 students have achieved the criteria of being passed in English subject. The rest 11 students were found to have score less than 65, which implied that this number of students, individually have not achieved the standard score requisite to pass the English subject. It can be inferred that the implementation of the instructional package developed based on PBL approach, especially where English was taught for occupational purposes such as in Vocational High School was categorized effective. The achievement of the students in the current study indicated the positive correlation with the improvement of their critical thinking ability.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

In general, the students who have involved in the study stated that the instructional packages developed improved the students' communicative competency and critical point of view, as well. Aside of the content which directed the students to the above goal, it was also supported by the condition and opportunity which possibly enable them to interact better one another. Nevertheless, in certain topics students still felt difficulty to communicate fluently due to limited vocabulary and schemata related to the topics (Mennin, 2007; Wang et al. 2002). However, Most of the respondents asserted that by the existence of the instructional packages designed based on PBL approach made them became more independent in learning English as PBL concerns for the development of individual, group, and practice. Therefore, some aspects on PBL approach need to improve. This is in a line with Sato (2011) has studied regarding the implementation of PBL that found contents, learning duration, learning environment, tutor roles, and other aspects necessitate to improve.

The instructional package designed as to what its nature, systematic, consistent, and rational can improve communication competence among the students at Vocational High School. The effectiveness and efficiency of the instructional package developed based on PBL approach became clearer when the students involved in this research were able to follow the principle of learning English at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia. The application of the instructional package based on PBL approach also showed that the activities done during the teaching program tends to increase the students' social competence in collaboration to finish their group works. They can show their respects and appreciations between one another during the small-scaled group presentation (Moust et al. 2005). However, this instructional package requires many modifications and suitable preparation to teach English in vocational high school through PBL approach. English teacher may adopt what has been studied by Ferreri and Connor (2013) that redesign a large class into a small group discussion format proved promoting an active-learning in which requires advanced planning. As a new applied model in teaching English in the current EFL teaching context, there are still several challenging factors need to anticipate. One of them is the students' habit of using their mother tongue while working in-group. This is very common problem in the classroom for non-native English speaker (Harbord, 1992). Another one is the students' level of English proficiency should have first priority in order that students with the low-level ability could have support from the higher level ability students. Students in a group have different level of English proficiency owing to the difference of language-learning background (Gradman and Hanania, 1991).

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This research shows that the instructional package developed based on PBL approach in teaching English at Vocational High School in Makassar, Indonesia was effective. It is helpful in developing the students' communicative competence as well as their critical thinking through developing instructional package, such a lesson plan and students' worksheet in English based on PBL approach. This indicates that the implementation of the instructional package was successful in

improving the student communicative aptitude. The students could enhance their critical thinking through the implementation of the instructional package. Students' ability to communicate is better than prior to the application of the developed package. In EFL teaching context, habit of using mother tongue in group work and English proficiency are the challenges need to anticipate as studied by Harbord (1992) and Gradman and Hanania (1991) respectively.

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